

*"Consecrated souls have  
the responsibility of  
giving witness within  
the Church.*

*They are charged with  
orienting the Christian  
community toward an  
ever-increasing degree  
of intimacy with  
Christ."*

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# *The Vocation to Holiness in the Church*<sup>1</sup>

J. GALOT, S.J.

A dominant question concerning the recent session of Vatican II was: should the schema on the Church have treated religious life in a special chapter devoted exclusively to that subject or should the considerations of religious life have been included in the chapter which treats of the holiness of the entire Church? Many religious would have preferred the first alternative, and a number of the Council Fathers were also of this opinion.<sup>2</sup> But the schema followed the second alternative. Several Conciliar Fathers went on record as approving this second manner of proceeding.<sup>3</sup> This approach avoids giving the impression of a privilege or monopoly and emphasizes the role of the religious state as the outgrowth of the sanctity of the Church as a whole.

Many religious will readily understand this manner of viewing their state within the framework of Christian holiness. They have an awareness that the religious state makes little sense except within the organization of the Church, where its mission is to contribute to the sanctity of all Christians — indeed, to the sanctification of all humanity.<sup>4</sup> Far from wishing to be confined in isolation or desirous of constituting a privileged class, they know that their religious vocation imposes a degree of separation from the world only for the sake of service to the totality of Christians. For this reason the service should be all-embracing and rendered with humility. The efforts of the religious toward sanctity aim at fostering the holiness of the laity.

<sup>1</sup>This article first appeared as "Vocation à la sainteté dans l'Eglise," in *Revue des communautés religieuses*, novembre-décembre, 1963, pp. 258-274.

<sup>2</sup>Father Sepinski, Minister General of the Franciscans, in the name of twenty bishops and a great number of Superiors General and other priests whose statements could not be given orally.

<sup>3</sup>Let us cite in the 56th general assembly Msgr. Charue, bishop of Namur, Msgr. Urtasun, archbishop of Avignon, Cardinal Silva Henriquez, archbishop of Santiago in Chile; in the 57th assembly Cardinal Doepfner, archbishop of Munich. We gathered our information from the *Journal du Concile* given daily by *La Croix*.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. R. Carpentier, S.J., "Mission ecclésiale de l'état 'canonique de perfection,'" in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 78 (1956), p. 915-36.

The purpose of this article is to point out the contribution the religious can make to the holiness of the entire Church and to call attention to the solidarity he should enjoy with all members of the Mystical Body.

#### THE COMMON HOLINESS OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH

Chapter IV of the schema points out that the call to sanctity is addressed to the whole Church, to laymen as well as to priests. We must consider this universal vocation to holiness as the framework and foundation of the more particular vocation to the religious life. It should be recognized that this call to sanctity has not had adequate repercussions in the minds of many laymen, because the latter's participation has not been sufficiently stressed. The Council's statement will help to illuminate the present state of the question. At the same time it will enable religious to gain a proper insight into the ecclesial aspect of their vocation and their responsibility to the laity. There are not two grades of holiness; there is only one, held in common by all members of the Mystical Body.<sup>5</sup> If the religious state is a state of holiness, so is the lay state. The means of assuring holiness may vary, but holiness itself is identical in each and every man.

What constitutes holiness? The schema relates it to Christ, its source and model, and defines it by the twofold commandment of perfect love of God and neighbor. Several Council Fathers called attention to the insufficiency of this notion. And, as a matter of fact, sanctity does not consist only in moral perfection, which results from the observance of this twofold and very basic commandment. Sanctity is, first of all, God's ascendancy over the soul, his presence in it, and the communication of his life to it. The divine ascendancy is exercised by the sacramental character which effects a "consecration" of the soul and confers a fundamental sanctity upon it. This type of sanctity can be called objective, since it exists independently of the individual's subjective dispositions and permits every Christian to be called "saint," according to a frequent practice in the epistles of Saint Paul. The

<sup>5</sup> Msgr. Philippe, O.P. calls to mind the fact that the general end of the religious life is substantially identical with that of the Christian life, in his work *Les fins de la vie religieuse selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Athènes-Rome), p. 26-27.



communication of the divine presence and the infusion of the divine life are brought about by grace, which is itself introduced by the sacramental character. Subjective sanctity is established by this medium and depends on individual dispositions for its maintenance. It is lost by sin. It is this subjective holiness which most often receives the name of sanctity. It requires the indwelling of the Holy Trinity within the soul and a radical transformation of human nature, elevated and animated by the life of Christ. This subjective sanctity comes into its own, grows and develops through the sacraments while requiring the individual's collaboration through faith, hope, and charity. The moral aspect of sanctity appears in this collaboration with the fulfillment of the bipartite commandment of love.

This type of sanctity is integrally offered to all Christians. It belongs to the essence of the Church. When religious attempt to live in intimate union with the Lord, they are practicing a way of life that is accessible to all. Christ offers his intimacy to every man, and all are called to an habitual state which permits them to declare with Saint Paul, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Thus perfection should in no way be made to appear as reserved exclusively to the religious state any more than it is restricted to the clerical state or to the episcopacy. Indeed, all Christians are called to perfection, and all are obliged to strive for its attainment. They cannot put limits to their virtue nor restrict their generosity. Jesus himself made a formal declaration to this effect: "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).<sup>6</sup> The model to be imitated — the Father — is infinitely perfect. A more perfect model does not exist. Jesus wished the divine perfection to be reflected in our human conduct. He reveals this model in his deportment, since he is the living image of the Father to the degree that whoever sees him sees the Father (John 14:9). Through him the Father's perfection is communicated to men.

<sup>6</sup>Father Lagrange observes that in the text of Saint Matthew this declaration does not look only to the love of neighbor because it forms the conclusion of the whole discourse of Jesus (5:17-47) on the new perfection. *Évangile selon saint Matthieu* (Paris: 1923), p. 118.

The expression "state of perfection," employed to refer to religious life, is an unfortunate one. It refers to a perfection to be acquired, and is therefore distinguished from a state of acquired perfection — which is an even more unfortunate expression. Even so, it would seem to reserve the desirability of perfection to religious when in reality all Christians should strive for it. It is readily understandable that the expression "state of perfection to be acquired" gave rise to objections among the Council Fathers. One religious, Dom Reetz, Abbot of Beuron, favored dropping the terminology even though it was employed by Saint Thomas, since it intimates pride and could be replaced by the simpler expression, "religious state."<sup>7</sup>

It is fitting to emphasize, in keeping with the fourth chapter of the schema, the degree of love which is the object of the call. Total love is not the privilege of any particular way of sanctity within the Church; it is expected of everyone. It is not in the form of a counsel but in the very first commandment that Jesus employed the terms of the Jewish law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength" (Mk. 12:30; Mt. 23:37; Lk. 10:27). No one is exempt from this precept. God requires a love which is complete and twofold. On the one hand, everyone must give him his whole being: "with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind"; on the other hand, he should give it with an intensity in which all his energy is spent: "with thy whole strength."

The religious life cannot claim, any more than the priestly one, love of neighbor, the apostolate, or service to the Church as its distinctive feature, since these things are required of all Christians. Every disciple of Christ must love his neighbor as Christ loved us, that is, by putting his whole heart into his love. And every Christian, by his Christian vocation, receives an apostolic mission, a mission of testimony and collaboration in the expansion of Christ's kingdom. He is committed to service of the Church through his Christian life.

It is, however, undeniable that the religious life involves a deeper commitment in the love of neighbor, the apostolate, and

<sup>7</sup> 58th general assembly.

service to the Church. But the ideal love, profound and complete, belongs to all Christian people. By grasping this truth more thoroughly, religious can enter into the very heart of the people of God, where they will be engulfed in the charity of the Mystical Body.

#### SPECIAL VOCATION TO HOLINESS

The fact that the call to holiness is universal does not mean that it is uniform. Although it is addressed to all, this call assumes a special form in the case of certain souls who are invited to embrace the religious state where union with Christ and love of God and neighbor are fostered in a special way.

Among the special calls to holiness, that of religious life occupies a place of outstanding importance in the Church. At the Council, Bishop Charue of Namur declared that in the march of God's people towards sanctity, religious are the vanguard;<sup>8</sup> and Cardinal Doepfner, Archbishop of Munich, in the name of the conference of German and Scandinavian Bishops, stressed the Council's duty to proclaim the excellence of the religious state, describing religious as a sign, a precious pearl within the Church.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, religious do have a kerygmatic mission and even on earth they reflect the celestial life.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that besides the religious life there are other forms of special vocations to holiness. Several Council Fathers called attention to the holiness which is proper to bishops<sup>10</sup> and a larger number requested that the holiness required by the priesthood be brought into sharper focus.<sup>11</sup> And in fact, the episcopacy and the priesthood demand a high degree of holiness. Bishop Huyghe of Arras observed that the religious counsels concern other persons in addition to religious. He pointed out that laymen, while living in the world, may practice poverty and vol-

<sup>8</sup> 56th general assembly.

<sup>9</sup> 57th general assembly.

<sup>10</sup> Cardinals de Barros Camara, archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and Gilroy, archbishop of Sydney (57th general assembly); Msgr. Franic, bishop of Split (58th general assembly).

<sup>11</sup> Msgr. Bauerlein, bishop of Srijem (56th general assembly); Cardinal Cerejeira, patriarch of Lisbon (57th general assembly); Msgr. Gonzales, archbishop of Ossirinco; Msgr. Klepacz, bishop of Lodz; Msgr. Gopu, archbishop of Hyderabad (59th general assembly).

untary continence, and he expressed a desire for the Council to declare the excellence of this life.<sup>12</sup>

The perspective of this diversity must not be lost. It is essential to recognize the value of each of the special vocations and what they contribute to the holiness of the Church. All these special vocations can be included in the category of consecrated life. It is true that the expression "consecrated life" is not free from ambiguity, since in a very true sense every Christian is consecrated to God, first by baptism, then by confirmation. But the term "consecrated life" is used here in its most current meaning, that is, a kind of consecration which surpasses the common demands of the life of every Christian and which involves a more complete gift of self, one which is manifestly oriented towards perfection through love. Aside from the consecration characteristic of religious life, there is that which is practiced in secular institutes, that which is implicit in the priesthood, and that which results from the special type of promise or vow which does not entail adhesion to a community or an institute.

Consecrated life derives from the will of Christ himself as it appears in the Gospels. Thus one can say that in its general form— independent of any particular specifications it may assume, notably in the religious state— this type of life is of divine right. It is Christ who requests of certain individuals a more direct or complete attachment to his person, Christ who asks them to renounce riches and who proposes the ideal of virginity to them. The holiness of the Church, then, necessarily embraces various forms of the consecrated life. These special vocations played a primordial role in the call which Christ made to humanity in general; they continue to play this role in the Church today. Let us examine in greater detail what constitutes their essential contribution to the holiness of the Mystical Body.

#### UNION WITH THE LORD

We have made it clear that holiness consists in union with Christ. On the one hand, there is God's ascendancy over the soul, his presence therein, and the consequent divine life in the soul. On the other hand, there is the human collaboration which receives

<sup>12</sup> 58th general assembly.



this presence and this life. In the case of the consecrated life, we can assert that there is a divine call to more direct intimacy, a more particular invitation to the divine presence, the request of total response to this presence, and the more exclusive gift of the person involved.

Let us consider the concept of vocation as it is presented in the New Testament. Its essential objective is proposed by the formula, "Follow me." This is the invitation which Jesus addresses to those he wishes to make his apostles or privileged disciples: to Philip (Jn. 1:43), to Levi (Matthew) (Mk. 2:14; Mt. 9:9; Lk. 5:27), to Peter (Jn. 21:19), and to others whose names have not been preserved for us (Mt. 8:22; Lk. 51:59; Mt. 19:22; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 18:22). The words, "Follow me," are to be understood in their strictest sense, as they were understood by those who heard the call. Thus, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John "left all and followed him" (Lk. 5:11), since they realized that they were to abandon their occupations and their family in order to attach themselves to the Messiah (Mt. 4:22; Mk. 1:20), just as Matthew rose from his tax-collector's desk where he had been seated, putting an end to his career as a publican in order to accompany Jesus (Lk. 5:28; Mt. 9:10; Mk. 2:14).

To follow Christ is to adhere definitively to his person. The immediate character of this attachment is to be kept in mind. We can love Jesus and still keep our own occupation and way of life, without accompanying him wherever he goes. But when the Master calls us to follow him, he asks that we leave all through attachment to him.

The call to personal intimacy appears most notably in Jesus' encounter with the first two disciples. These, according to Saint John's Gospel, withdrew from John the Baptist's group to follow the new Master: "'Rabbi . . . where dwellest thou?'" they ask. Jesus does not answer their question directly; rather, he invites them to find their answer in the experience of intimacy with him: "Come and see." And, in fact, that is what happened: "They came and saw where he was staying and they stayed with him that day." The evangelist clearly grasped the importance of that event, for he was specific even to the hour: "It was about the tenth hour" (Jn. 1:38-39). The disciples had set out on a capital experience,

a new way of life which consisted in "living near Christ." It is indeed a question of personal and immediate union.

Saint John, by employing the verb "to live," suggests the stable, definitive value of this way of life, even though the first experience is limited to only one day. The disciples live close to Jesus, they live where the Master lives. The nuance of contemplative intimacy is thus more clearly connoted than it would be by the verb "to follow." To be Christ's fellow-traveler is not, first and foremost, to act with and for him, but essentially it is to live in his company.

The expression by which Saint Mark designates the first end sought by Jesus in the choice of his twelve apostles is not less characteristic: "And he appointed twelve to be his companions and to go out preaching at his command, with power to cast out devils" (Mk. 2:14). Before mentioning the apostolic mission of preaching or the struggle against the spirit of evil, the evangelist announces companionship with Jesus as the first duty. "To be with him" is the equivalent of "to live near him" as Saint John expresses it. A possible interpretation is that the evangelist assigns an apostolic aim to the institution of the Twelve — since at the time when Saint Mark was writing, the mission of preaching and of giving witness of the Church which had been confided to the apostles appeared to be fundamental to her foundation. While the fact of accompanying Jesus could seem transitory, a hangover from the past, characteristic of Christ's terrestrial life, it may seem more remarkable that contemplation is, nevertheless, the primary *raison d'être* of the Twelve: the aim of contemplative intimacy precedes that of preaching and the apostolic struggle.

"To be with him" does not constitute an exclusive privilege of the Twelve. Thus Saint Luke declares that several women accompanied Jesus, as did the Twelve: "And with him were the Twelve and certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary, who is called the Magdalene, from whom seven devils had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who used to provide for them out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3). This mention, brief as it is, is sufficient to inform us that women were invited to follow the Master, to abandon their habitual occupations and devote them-

selves to the enterprise undertaken by the Savior. These women rendered service to the community of the disciples; but what is of prime importance in their situation is the personal attachment to Christ, the fact of being with Jesus. This primordial fact reflects an element which is significant for the sanctity of the whole Church. It shows that the first duty of Christian holiness involves personal attachment to Christ. Those who are not called to abandon goods and family to follow him understand more easily, in view of those who are so called, that the Savior has a claim to personal love, and that man is summoned to intimate union with him. Consecrated life thus becomes an invitation addressed to the body of Christians to unite themselves as closely as possible to the Master. It appears to be a kind of constant example of the capital importance of intimacy with the Lord, the example of an existence centered around this love. Although it is reserved to a chosen few, the consecrated life is essentially a wealth shared by the entire Church.

A surface Christianity is thus condemned. There is no place for a religion which would consist first and foremost in traditional gestures and customs, or which would limit itself to moralizing and observing certain select precepts. The consecrated life attests that Christian life has roots in a mystique, in a union in which the human heart permits itself to be possessed by the Lord — for it is he who takes the initiative. It is a mystique in which every attitude, every move is polarized toward him.

Consecrated souls should never forget that they have the responsibility of giving witness within the Church. They are charged with orienting the Christian community towards an ever-increasing degree of intimacy with Christ.

#### THE RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD

Christ does not hesitate to ask of those who follow him that they give up "house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children" (Lk. 18:29). The call to the consecrated life does indeed entail a renunciation of the world's goods. Christ exposes this demand to the rich young man with great firmness. The latter had manifested a lively desire to attach himself to the Master, and approached him with considerable enthusiasm. Saint Mark tells us that he ran to him and prostrated himself (10:17). He is indeed fortunate,



and Jesus does not say, "Follow me," until after he has said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. . . ." (Mt. 19:21). The choice presented to the young man is not a condition of salvation, for he can observe the commandments while keeping his fortune, but the choice is posed as a condition of a more perfect life in Christ's company. The renouncement of goods should permit a more integral attachment to the Lord.

Such is the renunciation which takes place in the consecrated life. Even the priestly life as it is presently established does not necessarily entail forsaking the goods of the earth. Nevertheless, an ideal of poverty accompanies the priesthood, and evidence of the tendency to fulfill this ideal can be observed. Some of the Council Fathers requested that the episcopacy move in this direction, and one of them cited the example of Orthodox bishops who profess the vows of religion before being consecrated.<sup>13</sup>

We are attempting to call attention to the repercussions which the poverty of the consecrated can have on the sanctity of the entire Church. Christ asked for a spirit of poverty among other Christians and for a genuine relinquishing of earthly goods. Consequently, he called for a detachment of the spirit from the world and from cupidity. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24). By his more radical option, the consecrated soul gives witness to the orientation which every Christian should give to his choice between God and wealth. The witness of an effective renouncement stimulates other Christians to detachment and encourages them not to be slaves to money. The poverty of the consecrated life is thus destined to bring before the eyes of the entire Christian community the ideal of the beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Mt. 5:3). Certain members of the Church practice self-imposed poverty so that all her members may be "poor in spirit"; poverty sincerely practiced generates the spirit of sacrifice in others.

Almost the same thing can be said of chastity. When proposing the ideal of chastity, Christ made it clear that some are

<sup>13</sup> Msgr. Franic, bishop of Split (58th general assembly).



unable to understand it: "Not all can accept this teaching, but those to whom it has been given. . . . Let him accept it who can" (Mt. 19:11-12). Thus the call to a celibate life is not addressed to all; only those to whom the privilege is granted by the Lord will understand it.

The ideal of celibacy has been opposed to that of the conjugal state — to the point of giving praise to the former at the expense of the latter. A better perspective would point out that celibacy in the Church supports the marriage ideal. The consecrated life, in which the right to found a home is renounced, favors the development of sanctity in all homes. Consequently, he who consecrates himself to the Lord is thereby rendering a service to the Christian hearth.

He contributes to the holiness of married Christians in two ways. First, he gives the lie to discouragement and defeatism, by demonstrating that the flesh can be subdued in favor of a spiritual ideal. Secondly, chastity provides an example in which the human heart concentrates all of its affective power on Christ. By renouncing the love ties which grow in marriage, the consecrated person gives evidence of the fulfillment of the commandment that all Christians love Christ with their whole heart. This is a reminder that the Savior merits being loved above all other things. The ideal of virginity exists in the Church as a sign of that total love to which every disciple of Christ is invited. Those who bind themselves exclusively to the Master by setting aside legitimate affectional relationships remind others that even within the framework of these legitimate relationships the Lord should have the first place, and that every creature is to be loved because of him.

#### THE RELIGIOUS STATE

The religious state renders the witness of the consecrated life more manifest. This life is characterized by commitments made through public vows, especially those recognized by the Church. The fact that this commitment is of a nature to strengthen every Christian, each in his own way, cannot be stressed too much. Religious profession tends to reinforce the Christian's profession of his faith, to stimulate all baptized persons, and renders their commitment more voluntary and more meaningful.

On the one hand, the need for a very personal religion becomes apparent, and the choice of adhering to Christ is illumined. On the other hand, the more complete testimony is brought to the attention of many Christians who are invited, in like fashion, to be genuine witnesses of the Master. Religious help Christians to fulfill the mission of Christ assigned to his followers: "You shall be witnesses for me..." (Acts 1:8). Thus, by public witness as well as by personal commitment, the religious state serves as a sign and an example. It promotes commitment and testimony in the lives of all Christians.

In speaking of the role of the consecrated life in the over-all holiness of the Church, we have emphasized the twofold aspect of union with the Lord and renouncement of the world. Indeed, religious life aspires to accentuate both union and renunciation. It favors intimacy with Christ through the large amount of time devoted to prayer. Monastic life accords a considerable place to liturgical prayer, and religious life in general assumes a mission of contemplation and prayer in the Church. This prayer is in the service of the entire Church, not only because it implores the Lord for the Kingdom's great needs, but also because it attests before the Christian community the primordial importance of praise to and dialogue with God. Religious life constitutes a rampart of defense against the modern heresy of action. The place which prayer holds in religious houses supplies impetus to prayer throughout the whole Church and proclaims the necessity of vivifying action by contemplation.

Separation from the world is also more marked in the religious state. The religious habit, the cloister, the exterior conditions of religious life reflect this separation. Religious thus visibly accomplish what all Christians ought to realize spiritually. Jesus contrasted his spirit with that of the world and proclaimed that his disciples were not "of this world" even though they were "in the world" (Jn. 17:14, 11). By withdrawing from certain mundane activities the religious reminds Christians of the necessity of withdrawing from the spirit of the world and resisting earthly passions. This effective renouncement achieved by certain individuals should stimulate the withdrawal which all persons are called to effect within their hearts.

Far from being a separation from other Christians, the withdrawal of religious persons constitutes a union with them in the ideal of charity. Members of religious institutes are set apart in order to serve other Christians by encouraging them in the struggle between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. Furthermore, the separation amounts to a very special form of support to other consecrated persons. How erroneous it was to oppose the ideal of "lay" consecration, more involved in the world, to that of the religious state, as was sometimes done in the past. Both can be correctly considered as the same ideal expressed in different forms. The spirituality of the Secular Institutes, although it has a distinctive flavor, was developed along the same evangelical lines as that of religious life. The two forms of life should continue to be mutually helpful. The religious state leads all consecrated souls of the age to live an interior life that is profoundly detached from the spirit of the world. The example of the Secular Institutes reminds the religious of the necessity to adapt themselves to the surrounding milieu and to become committed to the world which Christ is to transform.

There is yet another way in which the religious state completes and reinforces the state of the consecrated life. In addition to the ideal of poverty and chastity, it adds that of life in common and of obedience. Even if it is true, as Bishop Huyghe observed, that obedience did not appear as a part of the consecrated life until toward the fourth century,<sup>14</sup> it is no less certain that this virtue played an essential role in the life of Christ and forms a basis for the value of his redemptive sacrifice. It was by the total obedience manifested on Calvary that Jesus accomplished the triumph of the resurrection and ransomed humanity (Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 5:8-10). Indeed, religious obedience is in conformity with an essential characteristic of Christ's conduct and of his redemptive work.

Religious obedience encourages every Christian to conform to Christ's example even to the point of the heroic fidelity of the cross. The vow of obedience manifests the value of supernatural obedience and the merit of submission which looks to God's will when recognizing human authority. A concern for liberty and

<sup>14</sup> 58th general assembly.

emancipation can easily obscure the Christian's view of this value. The tendency to affirm the human personality has led to lack of esteem for obedience, sometimes interpreted as an obstacle to the full development of the personality. Religious obedience gives testimony of this development which is not achieved without sacrifice, and it attests the existence of a superior liberty which, by willing submission in the spirit of faith, permits itself to be guided by God and opens the way to the grandeur of divine designs.

Christians thus have a model to which to conform in permitting themselves to be led by the divine will, to accept events in which this will is manifest, to obey authority, to execute the commandments of Christ, to reconcile themselves to inevitable decisions and to the discipline of the Church.

The example supplied by community life is also important. It prolongs the image of the first apostolic community and presents itself as an integral accomplishment of the great precept of mutual charity. This life shares the mystique revealed by Christ's declaration: "For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

The religious community should contribute to the image of the Church, her unity and her charity, because through the Church the ecclesial image is most fully developed. And in fact, it is a characteristic of the community that it is founded exclusively on a supernatural tie, the common attachment of all its members to the Lord. So it is with the Church, a society based on Christ, who is the center of adhesion for all believers. The religious community seeks to fulfill the ideal of the Church in all its amplitude as a community of faith and cult, thus being a community of life, enclosing the entire human existence within the bonds of charity.

In this way the charity of the religious community is destined to reveal the profound unity which animates the entire Mystical Body, and the concrete testimony of any one community clearly suggests what should be the charity of the immense community that is the Church. The principle of mutual love appears here in all its force. The religious life has as its mission the constitution of a foyer of charity which diffuses its fervor throughout the Christian milieu. It demonstrates that one can only devote himself to Christ by coming closer to his neighbor. In attempting to fulfill



completely the commandment of love, the religious community fosters the realization of that commandment throughout the Church.

#### IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Religious, along with other consecrated persons, are in the service of the entire Church to such an extent that the spiritual riches gained by them are shared by all Christian people. A Council Father, Monsignor Leiprecht, bishop of Rottenburg, compared the sanctity of religious engaged in the practice of the evangelical counsels to the sanctity of laymen who are obliged to draw the inspiration of their spiritual life from the same counsels.<sup>15</sup> Religious sanctity should support and give encouragement to that of lay people by propagating the spirit of the counsels in the Church. This spirit is that of the beatitudes. This is a responsibility of which religious should be sensitively aware. The spirit of prayer and union with Christ in the entire Church effectively depends on it.

Attention must be called to the example to be given in the matter of apostolic action. The tremendous missionary effort of the religious orders was evoked at the Council and the eight hundred religious bishops there present bore witness to the fact. In recent times almost the totality of missionary responsibility has fallen on religious. We can rejoice that the missionary spirit is becoming more generalized, and commitments among the diocesan clergy and the laity are multiplying. The example of religious has been an effective stimulus for the Church as a whole. Their missionary zeal has been communicated to other members of the Mystical Body.

The exemption of religious is thus justified by their service to the Church. Dom Reetz made it clear that without this exemption religious could never have accomplished so much for the Church nor could the great missionary thrust have been realized.<sup>16</sup> It thus becomes clear how exemption is in harmony with the principle of episcopal collegiality, and the Council attempted to illumine this concept. And, in fact, religious are only exempt, that is, removed from the jurisdiction of a single bishop, in order to serve the universal Church more effectively — the universal college of

<sup>15</sup> In the name of all the German bishops (59th general assembly).

<sup>16</sup> 58th general assembly.

bishops directed by the Pope.<sup>17</sup> Exemption is not envisaged, and should not be used, as a power or a privilege but as an assignment to the Church's universal tasks.

By way of summary we must consider the role of religious life in the ecumenical movement. Msgr. Martin, archbishop of Rouen, expressed a wish that the holiness of the monastic state be considered with more attention. He said that the action would result in great ecumenical impetus for the Eastern, Anglican, and Protestant churches.<sup>18</sup> Monasticism, born in the East, still enjoys a very favorable reputation there. The Anglican Church possesses its monastic congregations, and the beautiful example of Taizé attests to the rediscovery of monastic life in the Reformed Church. Thus religious life is on the road to Christian union. By supplying its contribution to the Church's holiness, it is normal that the religious state favor its unity, since sanctity and unity are indissoluble signs of the Church. Let us therefore hope that the monastic ideal and the religious state will nourish the ecumenical togetherness at an increased rate in the future.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus religious life, and in a more general way, consecrated life, have great value as signs and testimony. We have called attention to the stimulus which this testimony constitutes for the entire people of God, for whom these states act as an effective force drawing all Christians to greater holiness by way of example. As a precautionary measure, we must state again that the consecrated life's first contribution is in the invisible order: the total offering of a life to God elevates the whole of Christianity, even when this offering remains hidden, unknown to all. The solidarity which unites the members of the Mystical Body results in their being mutual beneficiaries of the generosity of each participant. Every individual effort has its repercussions on the sanctity of the ensemble. The Church is thus enriched, in a way which is not always clearly visible, by the sanctity of consecrated lives. Those who answer Christ's special call are a source of benediction

<sup>17</sup> Cardinal Silva Henriquez, archbishop of Santiago in Chile, notably declared that the apostolic action of religious is at the disposition of the College of bishops through their attachment to the Pope, head of this college (56th general assembly).

<sup>18</sup> 59th general assembly.

for the world's Christian community. Their contribution, even though they may not know it, is effected by the purity of their love, when they achieve the ideal to which they have been called, or even when they ceaselessly struggle against human weakness. Once they have taken the effects of this invisible role into account, they should recognize in it a more imperious motive for making every facet of their existence a homage to God and a humble service to all of God's children.

#### THE AUTHORS

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## *The Natural Affections: Sexual Love*

A. DURAND

One of the things which baffled King Solomon was the way of a man with a maid. That this kind of love should be profoundly mysterious is not surprising, of course; of all our loves, that between man and woman is the most primitive and the most necessary. As Saint Thomas puts it, man is a conjugal animal even before he is a political animal. In founding the family—the essential part of race or nation—sexual love brings into existence all those different kinds of affection between relatives, between friends, and between fellow-countrymen, without which life would not be worth living. By nature the two sexes are made for each other. In the natural order, human beings are only half there, until they meet the man or woman with whom they can become that whole never to be realized by self alone.<sup>1</sup> By nature, they are unfinished, imperfect, not fully themselves until then. It is no wonder that the urge toward the other sex should be so irresistible and deep as to defy calm analysis.

Perhaps it would be well to make clear that the urge we are here talking about is not mere animal desire, physical passion, “sex” in the nasty, restricted meaning of popular magazines. In his famous encyclical on marriage Pope Pius XI insists that, in marriage, the souls of the two partners are far more closely united than their bodies. It is Christian marriage that he means, of course, in which the natural union becomes a union in Christ; but even the mere natural union is one of minds, of thinking beings. In fact it seems true that, in genuine love affairs, although physical passion can never be absent, it is not physical passion which comes first. The first attraction is always to personality, to character. However, it is not friendship which is beginning, because one of the persons is a man, the other a woman; and it is womanly

<sup>1</sup>In the natural order, that is. In the supernatural order, Christ can more than make up for the absence of any creature whose love we may have given up for Him.



character and manly character which are concerned. The two persons are not on a footing of equality. They are not going to exchange the same sort of love; one is going to love the other as man loves woman, while she is going to return the affection of woman for man.

What is this love like? Can it be described? Does it reveal any inner laws? Might we at least decide whether it is a gift-love or a need-love? Well, even this last question, simple though it appears, offers difficulty. What do man and maid want of each other? Put this question to them and they will answer at once that the question itself makes no sense; because what they want is each other — not the other's sympathy, or kindness, or company, or friendship, not sexual satisfaction only, but the other person, and the whole of him or her.

But if our question makes no sense to the lovers, does their answer make any sense to us? For how can you want another *person*? Or how can one come to possess another human being who is as unalterably free as yourself? Human beings cannot be owned by other human beings, surely. But the lovers see no problem. "She must be mine!" is the cry on one side and, on the other, "I will be his forever!" They will speak of loving each other before they were born; of being made for each other; of wanting to eat each other; of the one being the only girl in the world, while the other is of course the only boy, and so on, and so on. Just what all these expressions mean in terms of cold common sense may escape us, but there is not a doubt in the world that they represent the lovers' characteristic feeling. Almighty God is not likely to be surprised at it. In the story of the making of man, the first man's helpmate is formed from a rib of his own body. When he found Eve, how could Adam help feeling that he was only getting back something that had always been his? And at her first glimpse of Adam, how could Eve help feeling that to him she had always belonged?

Obviously, you cannot be in love with anyone in this way and yet be content to share him or her with another. Sexual love, unlike friendship, must be *exclusive*. It could hardly lead, as it should, to the faithful and life-long union of one man with one woman unless all others were shut out. And hence there is no

jealousy so fierce as that which can arise between lovers. This love differs from friendship in still another respect: it does not need to be requited. To become another person's friend is impossible unless that person returns your regard. But you can be in love, and deeply in love, with no hope, no hope at all, of return. Sexual love can be cruelly one-sided. This explains a lot of moistened pillows.

But why go on loving someone who has no use for you? It is because you cannot help it, of course. The kind of attachment we are now talking about is so natural, so violent, so deep-rooted, so uncontrollable, that all sorts of metaphors are used to describe the state of its victims. They are said to "fall" into it or to have "caught" it, like a disease; to be victims of a magic potion or to have met their destiny; to have been struck by Cupid's fatal dart or lured by a call they are powerless to resist.

The truth implicit in all these metaphors is beyond denial. Sexual love can reveal a blind intensity, and it is this blind intensity which gives it terrible possibilities. The explanation undoubtedly lies in the simple fact that, in this kind of love, *passion* is more violent than in any other.

Let us remind ourselves of the function of passion in human life. It will be recalled that we distinguished love on three levels.<sup>2</sup> (1) The lowest, shared with animals, is "love" as meant when we say that we "love" chocolate cake, or "love" lying in bed when everyone else has to get up. It stands for the sense appetite. This is passion. (2) Higher in value is truly human love, guided and controlled by reason. (3) Finally, there is the highest love, divine charity. Now, it was pointed out that even mere animal passion is a force of which we can never rid ourselves, and that, if we could rid ourselves of it, its loss would render us incapable of any other love, even of the love of God — for even God must be loved with our whole heart, and it is a human heart and human feelings that we have, besides intellect and will. We also saw how affection, the kind of love so natural in families and in all groups of people who are together a long time, draws a great deal of its power from passion. The warm attachment that we feel for father and mother, brothers and sisters, and for anyone with whom we

<sup>2</sup> "The Natural Affections." *Sponsa Regis*, August, 1964, p. 345.

live and work for a long time, is not something entirely thought out, deliberate, calculated. It is a duty, of course, and we can keep it alive out of duty, but it is a force not entirely under our control. And here, as we saw, lies the danger in affection: that part of it which springs from passion can escape control and so make our devotion selfish and harmful.

In friendship, a still higher sort of love, there is much less passion; and this is the reason why it is ranked higher. Still, even in friendship, some passion must be present. Friends simply must experience some sort of emotional attraction or sympathy, besides their common aims and interests; and if they are friends long enough, affection is bound to arise and to support their friendship.

But in sexual love, passion fairly explodes. First of all, there is present between these two lovers something that is not found in the other loves: animal desire, desire for a physical union and a physical satisfaction which involves the most intense sense-pleasure there is, a sense-pleasure which darkens and blinds the mind and, for the time being, puts an end to all rational and controlled existence.

(It may be pointed out that this is why Saint Thomas warns us that the man or woman who is pursuing this sort of pleasure when it is not God's will, for the sake of pleasure alone, has abandoned God utterly, has got as far away from God as possible.)

But in sexual love, quite apart from this animal desire and animal pleasure (which is what the cheap magazines mean by sex), the great difference between the sexes means that the two parties will need each other and want each other far more than two friends can, and even more than mother and child, or brother and sister. "For this cause a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife...." A woman's mind, tastes, temperament and feelings make her the companion a man needs by the very nature of his sex; and the man's character as man is what woman needs to complete what is lacking in her own sex. So the result is a mighty attraction, a tremendous passion driving and drawing the two together, its violence making it supremely hard to control, and supremely dangerous when out of control. The two lovers, intoxicated and blinded by their longing, may become as ready for evil as for good. They may come to take the metaphors of the



poets literally, to believe that this man or woman is their fate, and that they will be guilty of a kind of crime if they resist the summons of love.

Affection and friendship have never worked a tenth part of the evil and misery which have been worked by sexual love.

First of all, this sort of passion can make a man and woman utterly indifferent to their own good. For love, love as overwhelming and sublime as the movie makers may care to represent it, never ensures a happy marriage. It has too little use for prudence. Why this is so becomes clear if we ask again whether it is a gift-love or a need-love. It is plainly a gift-love in that both lovers are ready to share any imaginable misery with their beloved. But it is a need-love too, because the one unimaginable misery which neither can face is life without their beloved. Explain to such a young pair that marriage between them is sure to end in tragedy; that it will bring poverty, or disgrace, or a lifetime at an invalid's bedside, or even the loss of their Christian faith; expose the undeniable and fatal vices in the man or woman whom they want; the answer is always the same, "It's all lies; and even if it's true, I don't care. I can't live without my love."

And, paradoxical though it may sound, this is the love which, more than all others, can turn to hatred. Any kind of love, of course, can turn to hatred, but not to a hatred so ferocious as that between a man and woman who have loved each other. Here are two human beings, one or both unhappy unless in possession of the other. But should one be ready to take possession, while refusing to be possessed; or should one lose all interest, while the other remains helplessly fascinated, then a new passion can arise — a bitter, merciless hatred, as unique in intensity as the love from which it grew.

So much for the harm it can do to the lovers themselves. This passion can also make good people as capable of heartless cruelty towards others as of utter self-sacrifice towards the person loved. Sexual love can break homes as well as found them. How often in the name of love have faithful wives and husbands been betrayed, innocent children deserted, a good name dishonored, and grief and shame brought down upon devoted parents and friends. This is the dark force which can lead men and women to murder or



to suicide-pacts, thinking of themselves, all the while, as martyrs to a great cause.

Martyrs they are, in a limited sense, to a kind of propaganda, a commercialized romanticism characteristic of our world, which unfailingly represents sexual love as the supreme fulfillment of the person, implying that lovers should indeed be ready to do for love all that a martyr does for God. And we may notice that what they are asked to put in place of God is not the person they love but love itself, the glorious passion which has transformed their existence. In any age, it would not be surprising that such an attitude should be found in a pair of human beings in love; it is always easy for fallen man to convince himself that his strongest and deepest inclinations are also his truest and best. In our century, though, things are decidedly worse than usual. Hollywood, which, if it may be said to represent anything, stands for a last decadent form of romanticism, has filled our air with this sorry gospel. Someone has remarked that most modern readers of the tale of Mary Magdalene will be sure that our Lord's gentle words, "Many sins are forgiven her, for she has loved much," mean that he is ready to pardon her sins because she was so much in love when she committed them. They will even find beauty in this vile interpretation. The love of which our Lord is speaking is not natural love at all, of course. It is the love which Mary now has for God, which is very great because she has come to realize how great was the evil from which she has been saved. Though sexual love is mighty, there is something far mightier. Mary Magdalene had been granted "the love of God, poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

There is a final quality of sexual love in which lovers themselves always refuse to believe, though all the rest of the world knows it to be true. It does not last. No, it does not last and cannot last. The most overwhelming of all the loves is also the most short-lived. Any decent affection between members of a family, any genuine friendship, has a far better chance of enduring than the most sublime love affair in the world. Lovers are forever protesting that their love will never die, that not even the grave can sever them, that never will they yield their heart to another. And they mean it. What else can you say, when you are in love?

It's the way it feels. Every nerve and vein, every pulse of the heart, every thought, utters the same exalted passion. Why should such a state ever change? How can it change? What could possibly alter a devotion which is ready to face any ordeal?

But it is going to fade just the same. In the most agreeable love stories, boy and girl marry and live happily ever after. Well, perhaps they do, but not on this sexual love. All those ironic little stories which end with the phrase: "And then they were married," or the jokes about the altered state of things after the honeymoon, have a sound foundation in human experience. But what does happen? How can any married pair persevere together if their love is sure to pass?

If the marriage be Christian, what happens is that each takes the marriage vow as made to God, each is supported by His grace, and each out of love for God is resolved to be faithful. But even on the merely natural plane, what happens and was beginning to happen already, if the courtship and engagement were of decent length, is that the lovers' high passion was being transfused by those two quieter, surer, more durable and endurable loves, namely, affection and friendship. Husband and wife grow used to each other; they find a common purpose in home and children, and perhaps come to share many interests and pursuits of lesser importance. Though they may quarrel, and perhaps often, the quarrels are now family quarrels, which rarely prevent anybody from eating their dinner; they are not lovers' quarrels, which bring the world to an end for the time being. The change to a steadier, quieter attachment will not be sudden; nor do I mean to suggest that it will ever extinguish sexual love. Indeed, it might be more true to say that the sexual love takes over friendship and affection as they arise, rather than the reverse. But the sublime passion the lovers once knew, the complete absorption in each other, simply cannot last.

It would be a sad thing if it did. The boys and girls who cannot succeed in winning the devotion of a person who has captured their own love would have to make their long way to the grave with hopelessly broken hearts. It would be a formidable prospect even for the married if they had to face fifty years of the excitement, tears, rapture, and total distraction of mind which

they experienced in their early love. No, it won't last; it can't last; it never has and never will.

From this fact two interesting conclusions seem to follow. First, if the lovers do not possess characters capable of affection and friendship, their love will sweep them into marriage but will leave them then with nothing to go on with, nothing out of which a happy marriage might be built. And the second is that nobody is ever safe. Anybody can fall in love, and that is bad enough. But one attack of the disease brings no immunity; no matter how often a person may have fallen in and out, he or she can always fall in again, and just as head over heels as ever. There is something to think about.

I once had a man come to see me late at night. He had slipped out of his house and did not want his wife to know his errand. He had been married to her for seventeen years; and what he now desired was instruction in her religion. "She's such a wonderful woman, Father," was his explanation, "and religion means so much to her, that I've just got to have whatever it is that she's got." After seventeen years, he had come, not merely to love a woman as his wife, companion and friend, but to admire her more than anyone else he knew. May we call such admiration another kind of love? It would seem so, since it is clearly a form of good will towards another. Appreciative love is a common thing, and can be a beautiful influence on all our other affections. For example, though our love for our parents is at first almost entirely selfish, it begins to change as soon as we are able to esteem their characters, and to appreciate what they have done for us. Again, in true friendship, mutual appreciation is a necessity. Affection may be possible towards a person whom you cannot admire, but friendship is not; the reason is that friendship, since it is based on virtue, supposes deep esteem. Appreciative love, among good people, can reach heights of great detachment. Though we have no hope of their friendship, no hope even of making their acquaintance, it is still possible for us to admire other persons simply for what they are. Our most sincere wish is that they may go on being what they are, while we thank God that we have had the opportunity to witness, and to benefit by, the example of their beautiful lives.



## CONCLUSION

These brief remarks on appreciative love bring to an end our survey of the various types of natural attachment between human beings. As we have seen, the natural loves fall into three main classes: affection, friendship, and sexual love. Although even among men and women who do not know our Lord, these loves can do splendid things, it must not be forgotten that they are merely natural. This means that they are unions of sinners; of selfish, proud, sensual creatures, who cannot avoid evil for long. Natural affection and natural friendship are nearly always tainted by self-interest. And the union of man and woman in marriage has small chance of leading to happiness if untouched by divine charity. If great praise is lavished by ancient literature on examples of devotion to wife, husband, family, or friend, it is simply because they were so rare. As for our own generation, there is a bitter contrast between its foolish worship of romantic love and its quick and cheap divorce courts, where about one quarter of the romantic love affairs come to an end.

No one of us is by nature enough for the persons we love. They are all made for something greater than we can give. A mother is not enough for her child; the child will never find enough in his mother. Husband can never be all-sufficient to wife, nor wife to husband. And friendship only begins to be genuine when friends lose themselves in a common ideal. But it is the inevitable tendency of our pride to want to be enough, to try to be enough; to want another soul to find all its happiness in us. All natural loves carry in themselves this infection of human selfishness, which is almost sure to destroy them, and perhaps even turn them to hatred. Only when what we long for above all else is the love of God, may we be trusted with the love of other human beings.

"Yes, Lord, give me understanding, then, and I shall live. Teach me to comprehend how necessary is the love of Thee, and to what this love extends. Grant that I may see how, in Thy love, is contained the love which I owe to myself, and the love which I owe to my neighbour."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J. N. Grou, *Manual for Interior Souls*, French ed., (Paris, 1928), p. 266.



THE CONFESSOR AFTERWARD:  
A METAMORPHOSIS  
*for R. R.*

Halfway to the kissing of the stole,  
when your quick liplicking afterward  
is dry, the oil on your hands is cold.  
You are, for another instant, blurred;  
blurred. I see that your hands are yeastless,  
your face an uncertain whitelike chalk.  
This instant, where is your mouth to kiss  
the stole and where is your mouth to talk?  
Nor is it the time for pity now,  
nor ever, no matter what your needs.  
Do you not know this, do you not know  
purple makes your face look like it bleeds:  
you must transcend your crucifixion  
and turn to ask an idle question?

ARTHUR SOUTHWOOD

## Book Reviews

*A SAINT AND A HALF. The Remarkable Lives of Abelard and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. By Denis Meadows. Devin-Adair, New York, 1963. Pp. 209. Cloth, \$3.95.*

Denis Meadows, in a fresh appraisal of the conflict between Abelard, the "first of the Scholastics," and Bernard, "the last of the Fathers," gives evidence of great insight into the twelfth century. Viewing the controversy historically, it is seen not as a personal crisis for a heretic and an orthodox believer, but rather as a dispute between a rationalist

and a mystic. It was the grand climacteric of a transitional age synthesized in the thirteenth century with bold rationalism and profound faith.

The author sees Bernard as one of the world's greatest lovers. Sudden outbursts of anger against infidelity to truth, as he saw it, were combined with a Christian charity never eclipsed by militant orthodoxy.

In Abelard's contacts with people one sees great patience, generosity and loyalty. Only with his rivals in the academic world does he show

pride, arrogance and impatience with mediocrity. Pride rather than sensuality was Abelard's besetting sin, and at Cluny in his last days it was a matter of repentance.

"There is no-one so well versed in the nature of Christianity as the sinner. No-one except it be the saint." Peguy's words explain the title, *A Saint and a Half*, Meadows chose for his portrayal of these two dominant characters, who ultimately agreed on spiritual values.

Sister Claire Lynch, O.S.B.  
Saint Paul's Priory  
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**SPIRITUALIZE YOUR NURSING.**  
By Sister Mary Miranda Plachta,  
C.S.S.F. Saint Anthony Guild Press,  
Paterson, N.J. Pp. xvii, 227. Cloth,  
\$2.95.

Written for nurses, by a teacher of nurses, *Spiritualize Your Nursing* provides considerations that could inspire the nurse to raise every phase of nursing to a high spiritual plane. It aims to accomplish this by correlating the principles and practices of the faith to every facet of nursing.

The author's philosophy of presentation is directed first of all to the personal sanctification of the nurse. She would then have her ideal nurse allow this personal love of God to overflow into dedication and devotion to the sick.

According to Father Flanagan, Executive Director of the Catholic Hospital Association, the potential of the book is its "application of religious beliefs and practices to the daily problems of nursing."

This book is recommended as an ideal gift to a prospective nurse, a

graduating nurse, or a practicing nurse.

Sister Mary Xavier, O.S.U.  
Ursuline Academy  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**THE CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT.**  
By Karl Rahner, S.J. Translated by  
Cecily Hastings. Sheed and Ward,  
New York, 1963. Pp. 218. Cloth,  
\$4.50.

In *The Christian Commitment*, Father Rahner examines the place of the Christian in our modern world of pluralism and irreligion. He finds that place to be similar to that of the Jews in the diaspora. This is the reality, he maintains, and from it we must draw conclusions about our behavior as Christians.

The "conclusions" do not come easily. Because of the very nature of today's society, much of the Christian's life must now be lived outside the scope of the Church's influence. If, then, the individual Christian cannot live his life in an exclusively Christian environment (reading Catholic newspapers, belonging to Catholic organizations, trade unions and social groups) must he not learn to be a Christian *on his own*? It would seem that he must.

It would seem, too, that the Christian can only help save the world when, like Christ on the cross, he accepts in loneliness and humble submission God's will in the "crucifixions" of today.

But it is not the layman only who is called to a personal commitment and hence a personal struggle with the world's irreligion. The pastor, too, must consider his role anew. In our Lady's relationship to the

early Church, Karl Rahner sees a type of the new *Ecclesia* to which the pastor must turn.

Eucharistic devotions are to be seen as preparation for communion. And communion must be accepted as part of the sacrificial worship, involving eating. Finally, the Mass itself can be an act of worship for the individual Christian only if some respect is paid to phases of his religious development. Must it follow that obligations are to be imposed equally on all the faithful, and the same spiritual benefits be expected for all? Should not respect be had to the needs of youth in the liturgy?

The questions Rahner asks are vital. The answers, when he gives them, are vibrant. If his style is at times labored, if his sentences are burdened with parentheses or esoteric expression, it is because the author probes carefully and expresses cautiously ideas not easily grasped or readily accepted. The reader's effort to learn from Rahner is always repaid. He may well conclude with the author:

"There are many matters in which the Church could well be more modern than she is. But the time is beginning already in which having the courage to be old and human is going to be the most modern thing of all."

Sister Mary Catherine, O.S.U.  
Ursuline Academy  
Cumberland, Maryland

*THEY LIVED BY FAITH.* By Helga Rusche. Translated by Elizabeth Williams. Helicon Press, Dublin, 1963. Pp. vii, 124. Cloth, \$2.95.

Although Helga Rusche integrates solid biblical knowledge with liturgical relevance, *They Lived by Faith*, as a study of women in the Bible, is disappointing. This reader expected exquisitely set miniatures of these women, but such is not the case. Since the source material is quite restricted, the author "fills in" with history and men of faith. The women, consequently, often end up as incidental to the overall picture.

The Old Testament women are the author's undoing in that she fails to make them stand out as striking personalities. At least for this reader, they evoked no spontaneous response. The author merely repeats what everyone knows and fails to bring any fresh insights to her study. Moreover, she seems to overwork the central theme of faith by reading into the sacred text more than one generally sees (cf. p. 10, where Juda's refusal to risk his third son to Tamar is seen as stemming from fear and disbelief). The book comes to life momentarily in the chapter devoted to "Women as enemies of the promise," and then again in the account of Jephthe's daughter.

The New Testament section is more refreshing. The treatment of Mary and Elizabeth is enhanced by some personal insights on the "Magnificat." The woman at the well and Mary at the tomb also spark reader reaction because there is a successful attempt to portray them fully, as real flesh and blood people.

The author wants to demonstrate that belief produces community (i.e., God's People), unbelief destroys, and that belief is stronger than doubt (cf. Job). It is unfortunate that

somehow this cohesive force does not stand out more sharply. The most valuable pages are to be found at the end, a chronology of the women and a biblical register giving precise references for each. Thus, those who read and come away disappointed can go to the source and seek their own insights.

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#### APPROACHES TO THE CROSS.

By Canon Jacques Leclercq. Translated by the Earl of Wicklow. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963. Pp. 115. Cloth, \$2.50.

There has been much written on the subject of suffering, and we have all read how some saints actually found joy in and desired this state. But lurking in the minds of most of us is the somewhat reproachful air of certainty that it is something for which we shall never strive. On the contrary, because of an inner repugnance, we live in a constant, varying degree of fear of this mystery. We are unaware of the hidden significance of suffering because of false concepts which obscure our vision of its very subtle value.

Canon Leclercq effectively presents the evolution of the enigma of suffering by refocusing generally accepted notions of Providence. This leads the reader to realize that suffering must fit into the plan of his life. It is not merely an accident to be warded off at any cost. There is, however, "good" and "bad" suffering. "In order to be good, suffering must be separated from sin and

placed at the service of love.... Those who suffer badly...go from suffering to suffering." The author then leads the Christian to understand that his role as counterpart of Christ, to project Christ's personality, necessarily includes suffering. "Suffering willingly accepted (is) the sign of moral health, the expression of perfection.... A man who succeeds in everything seldom has a strong personality.... The man who does not know pain never reaches full manhood." The religious who "takes suffering on himself so that there may be less offense offered to God, suffers so that men may suffer less.... His suffering is, at the same time, for himself the knife with which he carves in his soul the likeness of divine love." Thus does the author draw the reader to a new outlook on the import of suffering.

Canon Leclercq then considers specifically the suffering of the sick and the aged, two conditions, with their attendant depressions, which are a constant source of anxiety. He reminds us that by placing these inevitabilities in their proper realm of importance within our providential existence, they become noble states of life—antechambers to heaven. "Suffering is the great cure of the soul, the instrument of spiritual health." The chapters devoted to these topics should prove to be of particular service to those who have entered either of these stages in life as well as a preparation for those who will eventually reach them.

Leclercq urges us by Christ's shining example not to lose sight of the goal in spite of the many ob-



stacles one encounters in the race. "The road of suffering is a royal road along which only those souls advance who are capable of greatness." Since he has pointedly indicated that suffering is a prerequisite for happiness and a natural element in our lives, this little book offers needed assistance to those who are yet groping about to resolve this mystery of life within themselves. If these can grasp the message presented herein, they will surely be inspired to prefix the familiar quotation, "O Death, where is thy sting?" with: O Cross, where is thy pain?

Sister Mary George, O.P.  
Saint Anthony Convent  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

*CRISIS OF FAITH: The Religious Psychology of Adolescence.* By Pierre Babin. Translated and adapted by Eva Fleischner. Herder and Herder, New York, 1963. Pp. 251. Cloth, \$4.50.

For sincere teachers of religion and theology there is always the nagging question, "Am I getting across; am I truly sharing the love that impels me?" We have lived without answers. In Père Babin's book we have the beginnings of an answer; we have an insight by which to measure our own conviction. We must look to the young people themselves. "They want to be listened to, to be taken seriously. If we know how to look at them they will listen to us; but how can we expect them to listen if, in pretending to speak to them, we talk only to ourselves?"

Of three main parts, the first presents the psychological data of

faith and conversion, the stages of growth of faith in today's youth. At a time of great opportunity and risk, educators must help the child "to go beyond a religion and morality of obedience. A mold can turn out individuals; but it is love, the call to the heart, which awakens free human beings." The adolescent must come to know God as Someone who calls him personally by name.

Part two is a direct challenge to the educator to bear witness with his life to the Easter-event here and now. "You accomplish more by what you are than by what you say or do;" they must see peace and joy truly reflected here. The quality required of teachers by adolescents is understanding; they must experience love and support. "As educators we should pronounce words only if there is real love in our hearts."

Babin gives us the main lines of catechesis and education in part three. He is especially good on the meaning of freedom, vocation and the gradual growth of a social dimension in faith. He insists on the need to clarify for youth that we *can* be at the same time virtuous and happy, fully Christian and fully human. "Woe to those who preach only a black Christianity, symbolized by death and flight from the world! They are unfaithful to the Resurrection of Jesus and to the hope of youth. Besides, no one will listen to them!"

Here, then, is a work of unusual importance for all who are engaged in sharing the faith. Perhaps it will help us to see our true role. "Young people must sense themselves touched by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ

today is ourselves, and our faithful attentiveness to them, despite our profound inadequacy. Even when we cannot do anything, it is never a waste of time to listen to them, look at them, love them, with that joyful hope which the Lord Jesus gives us."

Myron Kasprick, O.S.B.  
Saint John's Abbey  
Collegeville, Minnesota

*JOHN XXIII.* By Leone Algisi. Translated by Peter Ryde. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1963. Pp. viii, 288. Cloth, \$5.50.

Careful reading of this biography reveals the personal qualities and experiences of the peasant lad, Angelo Roncalli, transformed into the good Pope John, spiritual father of millions.

A hard - working, affectionate family, piety, and deep trust in divine providence were the inherited traits marking the personality that glowed with serene tranquility in later years. Angelo Roncalli early engaged the attention of his superiors. His first appointments as secretary to the Bishop of Bergamo, service as military chaplain and Director of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome were valuable experiences preceding his elevation to the episcopacy and subsequent appointment as Bishop to Bulgaria.

His missions to Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece were marked by unusual understanding of the Eastern Christians, not only those in union with Rome but also the Orthodox.

Frequent references are made to Roncalli's gentleness, detachment and ability to love all men as they

were, gifts especially manifest in his difficult diplomatic missions. "Serene" is the word to describe him. One little known comment depicts his utter reliance on divine providence: "It sometimes seems to me as though I were an empty sack into which the Holy Spirit suddenly pours redoubled strength."

The biography recounts the preparations for Vatican II, but does not include the opening of the Council. Twenty-six photographs enhance the value of the book.

Sister M. Eugene Reynolds, O.S.U.  
Ursuline Convent  
Paola, Kansas

*WORLD MISSION WINDOWS.* By Oliver Barnes. Alba House, New York, 1963. Pp. 206. Cloth, \$3.95.

"Every member of the Mystical Body is expected to put his shoulder to the world and help to move it toward God." So concludes this brief study of the need for missionary activity far outstripping anything that the Church has done in the past. The author asks pointed questions — "Why should any family on the face of the earth have two cars when millions of families don't have two square meals a day?" — and paints graphic word pictures of "misery-go-round" to help the reader of *World Mission Windows* see the "missionary problem in all its vastness and beauty." The sight is appalling, frightening, uncomfortable, shocking — yet inspiring too, because for the love of Christ as exemplified in Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, patroness of the missions, the sacrifices of each Christian can "send the gift of faith

around the world and save many souls from hell." This is the hope the author expresses.

Much more saddening are the statistics he quotes and the examples he gives to show that the "New Pentecost" of the Church's missionary work in the past third of a century has fallen far short of the goal of leading all men to Christ. This is particularly disheartening because the author stresses: 1) the world is ripe for mission activity; 2) men everywhere are hungering for the Word of God; 3) the most dynamic missionary activity of the 20th century is Communism, not the gentle law of love taught by Christ; 4) the Holy Spirit still proclaims—perhaps more clearly now than ever before—the saving power of God to those who have the opportunity to hear the preaching of the Word of Salvation.

This is the kind of book that the complacent must avoid if they are to have peace of mind; for those who carry within them even the latent beginnings of apostolic activity, *World Mission Windows* will provide much information about the world's needs from which the missionary-minded can glean help, suggestions, and inspiration that will lead them to join the Church in her age-old universal battle for the souls of men.

Sister M. Wilma Lyle, O.S.B.  
Mount Marty College  
Yankton, South Dakota

## SHORT NOTICES

*A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS*  
in the Knox translation. Edited by  
Leonard Johnston and Aidan Picker-

ing. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1963. Pp. xii, 252. Cloth, \$6.00.

A brief but valuable introduction on the four gospels counsels the reader to see them not simply as a "Life of Christ" but rather as separate pictures, each rich with its own purpose, its own special aspect of the good news. This handsome volume will be a pleasant companion for gospel meditation, a useful tool for teachers who prefer the Knox translation.

*RELIGIOUS ART IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.* By P. R. Regamey. Herder and Herder, New York, 1963. Pp. 256. Cloth, \$4.95.

A basic and formative work, treasured and studied in the French original for more than ten years, is now available in English. Father Regamey not only analyzes the problems but also gives us a theology of the sacred, and indicates some guides for art in the service of the liturgy and as a vital expression of the faith of today. Sound and constructive.

*THE MEANING OF THE MOUNTAIN.* By Sister Mary Faith Schuster, O.S.B. Helicon, Baltimore, 1963. Pp. ix, 329. Cloth, \$6.00.

A history of the first century of religious life and work of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. Lovely prose re-creates the story of hardships and joy, poverty and perseverance which were the stuff of which frontier religious and academic life were made. An essential part of the history of midwestern America.



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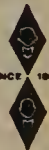
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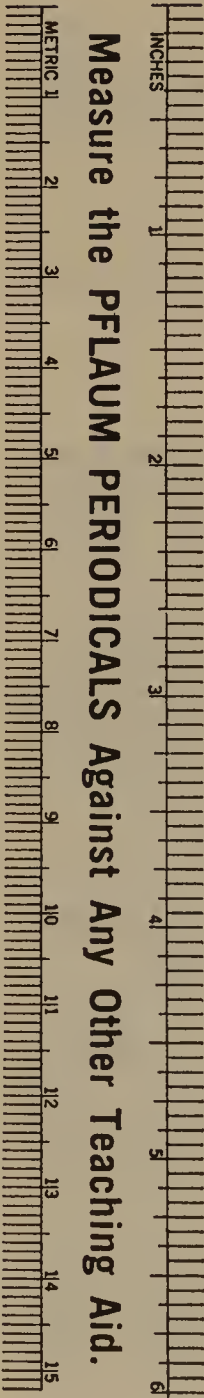
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